

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 01825 070321Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IO-13 AGRE-00 STR-07
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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9702
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1825

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRD, PEPR, ID, IN
SUBJECT: INDONESIAN-NORTH KOREAN RICE TRADE

REF: JAKARTA 2691

1. REFTEL'S INSIGHTS INTO NORTH KOREAN VICE PREMIER
KONG JIN-TAE'S RECENT VISIT WERE WELCOME AND USEFUL.

2. REFTEL REFERRED TO THE 107,000 TONS OF RICE WHICH
NORTH KOREA HAS CONTRACTED TO EXPORT TO INDONESIA IN
1978. THE NORTH KOREANS HAVE BEEN USING THE FIGURE
200,000 TONS. IN QUOTING THIS FIGURE IN A BORADCAST
ON FEB 2, THEY ADDED, "AN EXPORT CONTRACT WAS CONCLUDED
A FEW DAYS AGO BETWEEN THE TRADE CORPORATIONS OF OUR TWO
COUNTRIES." IN A FEB 18 BROADCAST, THEY CITED SEVERAL
ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN INDONESIA DEALING WITH THE KOREAN
RICE TRADE AND KOREAN AGRICULTURE GENERALLY. ARTICLES
CITED WERE AS FOLLOWS: (A) FEB 7 ISSUE OF "ECONOMY
INDONESIA", ARTICLE: "RICE IMPORT FROM KOREA", (B)
FEB 1 ISSUE OF NEWSPAPER "ANGKATAN BERSEN KJADA",
ARTICLE: "INDONESIA IMPORTS 200,000 TONS OF RICE FROM
DPRK"; (C) FEB 1 ISSUE OF PAPER "OMPAMLIMA", ARTICLE NOT
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SPECIFIED; (D) FEB 6 ISSUE OF PAPER "SINAR HARAPAN",
ARTICLE NOT SPECIFIED. IN ADDITION, THE NORTH KOREANS
CLAIM THAT THEIR AGRICULTURAL SUCCESSES HAVE COME IN FOR
A GREAT DEAL OF FAVORABLE COMMENT LATELY FROM THE
INDONESIAN NEWS AGENCIES ANTARA AND NKI.

3. OUR INTEREST IN THIS SUBJECT HAS TO DO WITH THE CURRENT

NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE, OF WHICH KONG JIN-TAE'S VISIT WAS A PART. WHILE WE BELIEVE THAT THE NORTH KOREANS WILL TRY TO USE RICE SALES IN SUCH A WAY AS TO GAIN DIPLOMATIC ADVANTAGE, WE HAVE FEW RELIABLE FIGURES TO DEAL WITH. SPECIFIC EXPORT FIGURES SUCH AS THE ONE GIVEN FOR INDONESIA ARE SELDOM ISSUED, AND OFFER A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO CHECK ON THE RELIABILITY OF OTHER CLAIMS (CROP YIELDS), OVERALL EXPORT FIGURES, ETC.). SUCH INFORMATION WOULD IN TURN AID CONSIDERABLY IN CLARIFYING OUR PICTURE OF NORTH KOREAN CAPABILITIES AND INTENTIONS.

4. IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL TO US IF YOU COULD FURNISH DETAILS (OR EVEN VERIFY/REFUTE THE EXISTENCE) OF THE EXPORT CONTRACT REFERRED TO, AS WELL AS OFFERING YOUR OPINIONS OF THE PUBLICATIONS NAMED ABOVE. SUMMARIES OR TRANSLATIONS OF THE ARTICLES CITED WOULD BE OF VALUE AS WELL.
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Message Attributes

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